

# HANDSTAND ART

GUIDE

Understand the balance's logic basics of your handstand

COACH  
YABO



ENGLISH

VERSION

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Handstand E-book / Table Of Content

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# INTRODUCTION

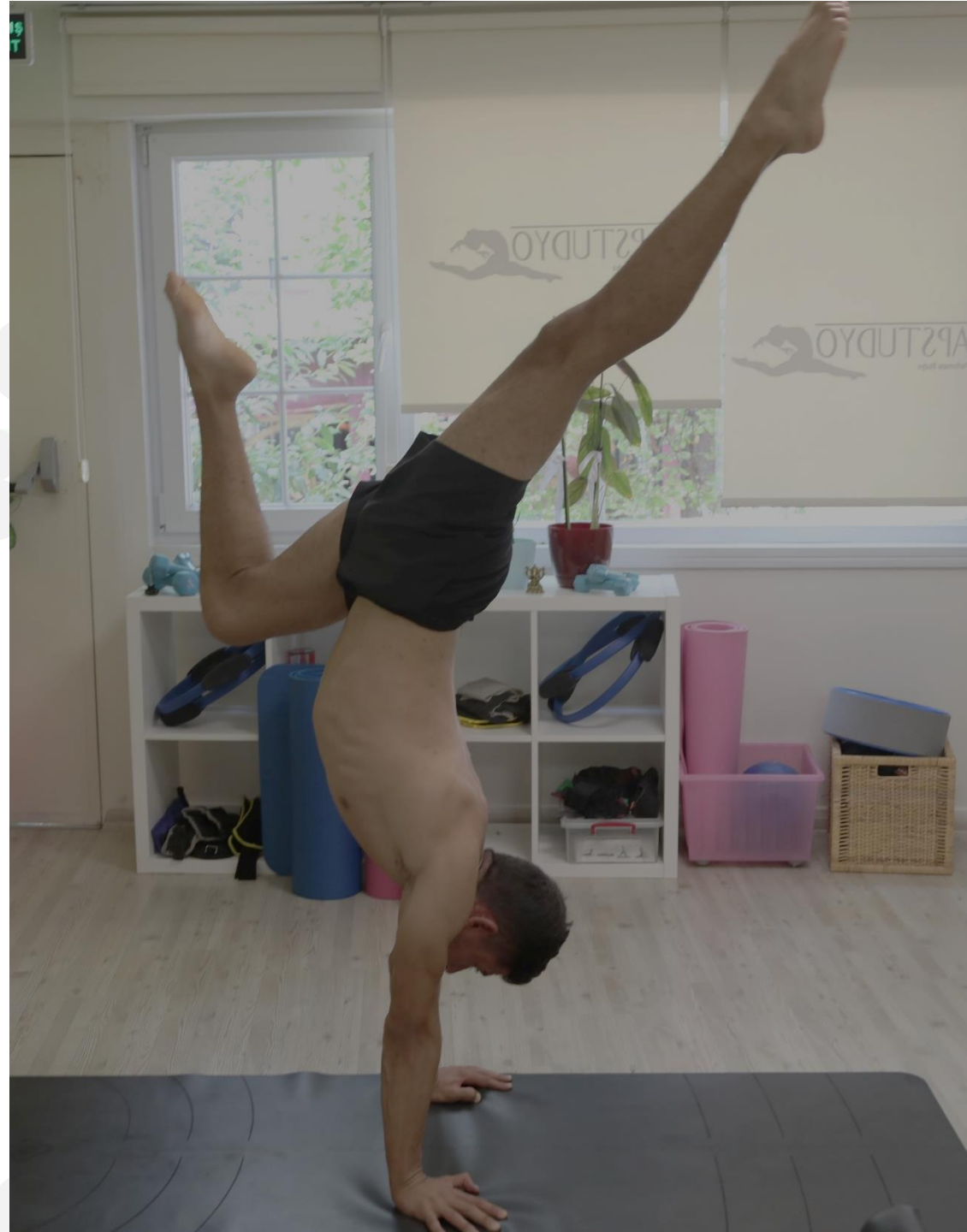
**What do you think when you watch someone doing a handstand?**  
**Do you think the person's position is statically (fixed) perfectly balanced? Or do you think the person is comfortably in that balance position?**

When you are balancing, it all comes down to not falling. You are balancing a handstand as long as your hands are on the floor and your feet are in the air. What you look like upside down is irrelevant, unless you have a specific line upon which you are striving for.

The first time you were shown the handstand, you were most likely shown the perfect handstand that a Gymnast or Yoga practitioner had done.

When you're watching the others handstanding it's easy to say that this handstand "Good" or "Bad". But in reality there is no good or bad handstand. It all really comes down to personal preference, you can think of it like an art. It doesn't matter what it looks like! What matters is what you're trying to portray.

The notion that a "good" handstand should be straight is actually not quite true. If you want to do the perfect handstand before you leave the wall, then you will be sorely disappointed.







# WHAT IS BALANCE?

Balance is about reacting.

Balance is the ability to keep a body upright and stable within the base of support with “**MINIMUM POSTURAL SWING**”. The key word here is “**MINIMUM SWINGING**”. In order to stay in balance, the body must **constantly react quickly** and make **constant corrections** (fingers thrust, center of gravity, shoulder angle, etc.)! **Being balanced isn't about holding on tight**, it's about NOT losing balance and NOT falling from a balanced pose using as minimal oscillation as possible.

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Let's do the following test together:

- 1) Stand up with your feet together.
- 2) Keep the chest tall and proud.
- 3) Lean back towards the heel off the foot.

What happened?

What you probably noticed is that the second you are about to lose your balance, your knees, hips and hands will move forward to keep you from falling. The body already knows what to do, because you have been doing it for a long time. It has become automatic and engrained in your brain to the point where you don't need to think about.

# WHAT IS BALANCE?

Balance is about reacting.

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Now you are learning to do the same thing on your hands, but your brain doesn't know what to do. So in the process of learning to balance you are simply learning strategies and techniques to correct your balance, to keep yourself from falling.

The goal is to train these various strategies until they become automatic and you don't need to think about it. So the common saying of “**FINDING**” balance is simply luck! What we are trying to do is “**CREATING**” balance by keeping ourselves from falling.



**“BALANCE IS NOT FOUND, BALANCE IS CREATED.”**



# THE GOLDEN RULE

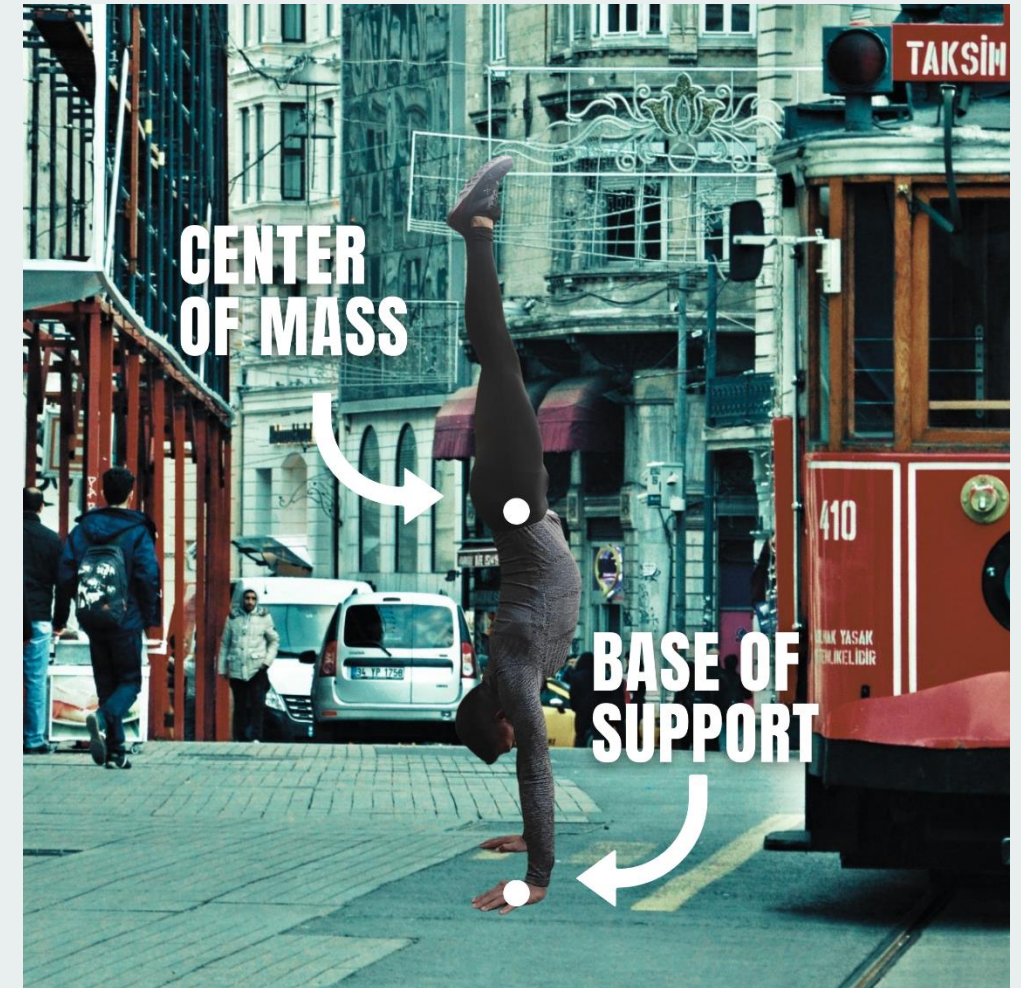
**The golden rule of hand balancing says that the center of mass must be placed over the base of support.**

In the previous example we asked you to stand up and move the center of mass back towards the heels until you lost your balance. With this test you got to feel what happens when the center of mass moves from being over the base of support (which is your feet, or the hands in a handstand).

When you stand on your feet you have the knees, hips, shoulder and then head in a stacked position, or a straight line from the bottom up. This way you have all the weight in the body centered over the base of support (the feet), and you get into a position where you only need small subtle corrections to maintain your balance.

Stand up and move your hips and glutes back behind you, can you feel that the ribcage and maybe the arms automatically move themselves forward. This is how the body makes sure that the center of the body is centered over the base of support. The same thing is required for you to hold and balance a handstand.

You should keep the elbows, shoulders, hips, knees and feet on the hands (supporting base) while standing in a straight and effective handstand. But to do this, you have to be strong enough to support your own body weight and press upwards. It also requires you to be flexible enough to be able to align and center your body without any lack of mobility (joint injury, flexibility problems etc.).



**“All we need to balance a handstand is to place our center of mass over our base of support.”**



# OVERBALANCE

In the handstand we have a broad support laterally between the hands, which means that we are more likely to vertically, or forward and back.

Stand up again.

This time I want you to stand with your feet together and move yourself forward until you almost fall forward or need to take a step not to fall. Did you feel that your calves got engaged and toes started pressing into the floor to keep you from falling forward or taking a step. In the same way you will balance your handstand.

When you are holding a handstand and your feet start to move in the direction of the heels or towards the fingers, your center of mass will move from being over the base of support, to being too far in front of the hands, and if you keep moving in this direction you will eventually fall forward.

All it takes to protect yourself from falling is to press your toes firmly into the ground and squeeze your body as hard as you can, especially your glutes and legs (since they are the top of the tower). We call this "**Overbalance**", meaning falling in the direction of the heels or the tips of the fingers.

"It's easier to balance through **OVERBALANCE**, than **UNDERBALANCE**."



# UNDERBALANCE

“UNDERBALANCE” is the opposite of “OVERBALANCE”, it’s falling away from the fingertips and back to the starting position. It’s harder to balance in UNDERBALANCE, and therefore we prefer to stay more towards OVERBALANCE.

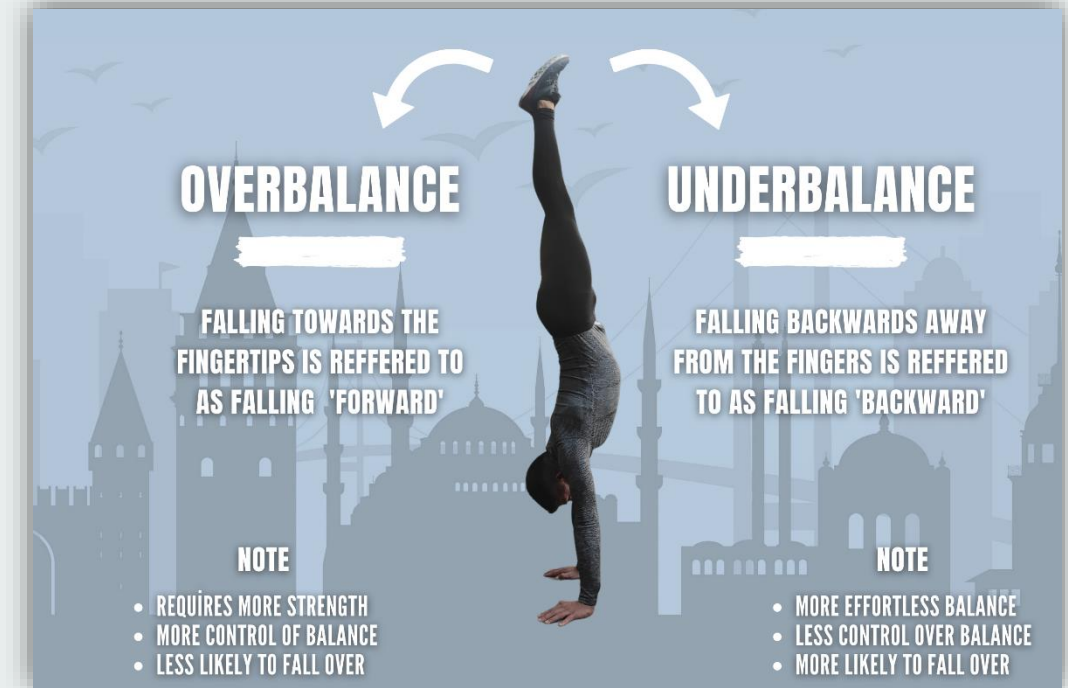
Do you remember when you stood up and let your weight move away from the toes and towards the heel of the foot?

The corresponding movement in the handstand, is that the center of mass moves from being over the hands, towards the heel or palm of the hand, and away from the fingers. This is what we call **UNDERBALANCE**.

If we don’t correct this change in position, it will result in us falling back with the feet to the floor, back to our starting position. Like our feet, we only have toes/fingers in one direction, and a heel or palm on the other end. When we **OVERBALANCE** we can press down the toes or fingers to correct our balance...

But in underbalance, there are no fingers to press with. We only have the palm of the hand, which is not able to generate much force. In order to correct underbalance and keep yourself from falling you have three different options:

1. Bend your arms.
2. Close the shoulders.
3. Move hips backwards.



Overbalance VS Underbalance



Video will be  
available soon

#### Performing The Toe Pull:

- 1| Go into a wall handstand, with the belly against the wall. Press yourself high up on the wall, and push tall.
- 2| Squeeze your glutes and legs while you let the hips slowly move forward towards the hands.
- 3| When the hips/shoulders are over the hands, you will have the toes supporting less and less on the wall.
- 4| Be prepared to fall into overbalance as you center the legs together, since your moving the center of mass forward.
- 5| Correct the overbalance by pressing the fingers down into the floor, and avoid falling over forward away from the wall.
- 6| Pause the position for 1-2 seconds and go back to the wall and repeat.

## The Toe Pull method

The toe pull teaches us to move either the hips, shoulders or arms in order to correct the weight shifting back towards the heel of the hand.

Toe Pull is an exercise that teaches you to correct your overbalance, or where the heels are traveling forward over the hands. It can be performed in a few different variations, and using different techniques.

#### The main ways used are:

- 1) Shoulders shifting the weight forward.
- 2) Hips shifting the weight forward.

In a wall handstand, with the chest against the wall, you are per definition in **UNDERBALANCE** as long as the feet are resting against the wall. If the wall wasn't there, you would have fallen down on your feet again.

Although the exercise is called a '**Toe Pull**' you don't want to actively pull the toes from the wall, when you do the exercise correctly you will feel that the feet '**float**' of the wall, this happens when the center of mass is placed over the base of support.

As you leave the wall you will most likely end up in **OVERBALANCE**... So be prepared to press the fingers down like in a heel pull if you feel the weight starts to shift over too much towards the fingertips.

# THE SHOULDER'S IMPORTANT

The straight toe pulls technic corrects the **UNDERBALANCE** by closing the shoulder angle, that is leaning forward with the shoulders.

A closing of the shoulder angle can happen for many reasons. One reason is that we are simply not strong enough to press ourselves high up in the position, causing the shoulders to collapse and lean forward. The result is that we will achieve the famous banana handstand.

A closed shoulder angle can also be used to correct **UNDERBALANCE**. If you start to go into **UNDERBALANCE**, or the feet are falling back away from the fingers, we can correct the balance by moving the shoulders forward. This moves the center of mass forward, which allows it to remain over the base of support and us not falling.

## Performing The Straight Toe Pull

Go into a wall handstand with the belly against the wall. Get your center of mass over the base of support by pushing tall and squeezing your glutes and legs. Allow yourself to lose a bit of the shoulder push so the shoulders relax and sink down, and then you want to move the shoulder forward until the feet 'float' off the wall.

Press down with your hands as hard as you can to regain balance into your handstand, try to reposition your hips over your shoulders. If you find this difficult, you can press yourself upwards by gently sliding your feet on the wall again after your shoulder is relaxed without leaving the wall completely.







# CONCLUSION

In this E-book, you've learned the basics of balancing. Here are the most important points for you to easily remember and look back on:

**Lesson 1:** To learn to balance freestanding it's not enough to build strength and good technique on the wall, it requires specific work on balancing.

**Lesson 2:** Balancing doesn't mean standing like a statue! Balancing means constantly trying to keep your balance active so you don't fall. Also, don't forget, balance is not found it's created!

**Lesson 3:** To balance you need to have the center of mass (center of the body) over the base of support (between the hands).

**Lesson 4:** In a straight handstand your hands are your base, and right above them you need to have the elbows, shoulders, hips, knees and feet.

**Lesson 5:** If the feet begin to tilt towards the fingertips, you go into overbalance, which you correct by pressing the fingers down into the floor.

**Lesson 6:** If the feet starts to tilt back and away from the fingertips, you go into **UNDERBALANCE**, which you correct by pressing yourself up and moving the hips back.

**Lesson 7:** It's easier to balance in **OVERBALANCE**, since we have fingers that are able to more easily correct the balance.